

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 645.

SATURDAY, MAY 6, 1876.

PRICE 1½d.

NAME-LENDING.

WHEN a man finds himself advancing in the world, and getting a little towards the front, he begins to discover that his name is in request for the purpose of sanctioning a great variety of objects with which he has no proper concern, or at all events cares little about. He is asked to allow his name to be put into lists of committees, managers, or patrons of schemes good, bad, and indifferent; some of them speciously philanthropic, others as speciously commercial and advantageous. To render requests of this kind agreeable, an assurance is perhaps given in a polite and considerate way that no personal trouble will be involved, no responsibility incurred. All that is wanted is a loan of your name. It would be a great favour if you would permit it to be used along with the names of a great many other persons of high station who have obligingly consented to let their names be employed on the occasion.

At first, there is felt to be something flattering in the request. You are made aware of being no longer an obscure individual, but a person of some note. Then arises the pleasing thought of seeing your name flourishing in a list of people of rank and title, such as earls, baronets, and lieutenant-generals. The prospect is very inviting. There is to be no pecuniary responsibility, while something may be reaped as regards popularity. And it is so very hard to refuse a request couched in terms so courteous and respectful. Accordingly, from these and other considerations, you allow the use of your name, and possibly give yourself no further trouble in the matter.

There can be no doubt that in innumerable instances, no injury whatever is sustained from the lending of names, while, on the contrary, much good may be effected. The practice, however, of giving your name to projects of which you know but little, and over which you exercise no sort of supervision, appears to us to be objectionable in principle. As is seen by almost daily experience, it is fraught with dangers absolutely appalling. By indiscreetly allowing names to be

employed in schemes of a visionary, or it may be fraudulent, nature, not only fortunes but reputations are sacrificed beyond recall. Cases of this nature are becoming so clamant as to invite a consideration of the whole system of name-borrowing and lending. Public morals as well as private sufferings are conspicuously concerned in the question.

There can, we think, be but one proper rule of action. That is, on no account to give your name to any project whatsoever unless well assured of its integrity, and unless you are able to exercise some control over the proceedings. Merely to give your name, and take no part in the way things are conducted, is to run unnecessary risks; for you cannot tell how things may be mismanaged, and how your reputation may be less or more compromised. You, in fact, leave matters to chance. At the best, you allow yourself to be put forward as a lure—a bait to catch some paltry patronage for a thing which ought in justice to stand on its own merits. Such seems to us to be the true view of the matter: names to be given only to what is ostensibly creditable, and to what the owners of the names give also a fair share of personal attention. Of course, the refusal of your name must, in a variety of cases, be far from agreeable. You can clearly see that you will be set down as a savage, or at least a very eccentric personage, who does not readily fall in with the fashions that prevail in society. Very hard, truly, to feel that you are warring against the edicts which prescriptively hold rule in Vanity Fair! Yet right is right, all usages notwithstanding. And is it not better to suffer a little present inconvenience than the future twinges of conscience, or a loss of self-respect? Out of false shame, to do what you know to be wrong, is to act under the most pitiful of all motives.

Properly considered, one's name is to be deemed more precious than his money. He who steals our purse, as Shakspeare observes with proverbial wisdom, steals trash, but he who filches from us our good name, makes us poor indeed. Yet persons are often not only regardless of the appropriation

of their name, but voluntarily contribute to the depreciation of what they should hold in so much esteem. It cannot escape notice that a name which is lent on all occasions ceases to be thought much of. Seen times without number in connection with a multiplicity of affairs, the public come to treat it with ridicule and indifference. It is a name—perhaps a good name—weakly thrown away. The truth of this may be pressed on the notice of kind-hearted people who are apt to come frequently before the public with complaints as to something which needs to be redressed. Their name gets so hackneyed, that when they have to remonstrate on matters of serious concern, nobody minds what they say. They have damaged a good cause by habitual indiscretion. A wise man nurses his name, and employs it—or allows it to be employed—only with the strictest regard to propriety. By a disregard on this point, a man is apt to become known only as a rash enthusiast, a buffoon—or a fool.

We happen to have known some amusing instances of persons of title making a kind of business of lending themselves out to dinner-parties. The borrowers were usually tradesmen who affected to have high-class acquaintances. They wanted a titled name to be shouted out when the honoured guest entered the drawing-room, and to have the pleasure of often addressing him by name at the dinner; as, for instance: 'Allow me to help your lordship to a slice of the turkey.' Or: 'Will your lordship be pleased to take a glass of that dry champagne? genuine Louis Roederer, Carte Blanche.' In London, some years ago, we knew a baronet in somewhat decayed circumstances, who dined out daily in houses where the host was glad to have him for the sake of his name. Another case which came to our knowledge was that of a lord with a fine sounding title, who may be said to have got his clothes for nothing from a fashionable West End tailor, on the understanding that he was to dine at the tailor's house when invited on any special occasion. Woe be to his lordship if he ceased to accept the invitations! A tremendously long bill running up as high as four figures, would soon have been brought unpleasantly under his notice. Such may be deemed melancholy specimens of men of good social position trading on their name. No doubt, hundreds of such cases are familiar to fashionable diners-out, as well as to the *habitués* of evening-parties. In fact, at the west end of the metropolis, beginning, say, at Berkeley Square, you are never sure that half the people you meet at these parties are not *invités* for the mere sake of their high-sounding name. We need hardly say that the hosts are of the parvenu order, whose aim is to make character by the distinguished names of their guests. It will be recollected that Mrs Hudson, wife of Hudson the 'Railway King,' who, in his latter days, was supported by charity, had the amazing tact to entrap the Duke of Wellington—the Great Duke—for one of her magnificent evening-parties. A splendid catch of a name that, seldom equalled before or since.

From the small sin of heedlessly lending names to float off balls, fancy-bazaars, and such-like petty affairs, there is a considerable stride to floating off and abetting a class of undertakings which involve a loss of many thousands of pounds to the poor dupes who are allured by false representations to their destruction. Here, the indiscretion rises to a participation in crime. Silly lords and baronets, members of parliament, officers in the army, and clergymen, possibly in the hope of securing some little pecuniary advantage, become the associates of swindlers, and condemn themselves to life-long regret, along with the consciousness of social disgrace. Is this not true? Can it be denied that apparently at requests preferred in a few smooth words, and from the miserable bribe of a guinea, or so, for attending meetings of directors, men of hitherto unstained character are known to imperil not only available means, but the precious reputation of themselves and families? Sad climax in an honourable career, to sink to the position of what is facetiously called a 'Guinea Pig!' Yet, that is too frequently done, if not from necessity, at least from choice. London is full of these Guinea Pigs, or Name-lenders. They swarm everywhere. They are seen in the grandest houses. Connected with dozens of schemes got up to pick money from the pockets of too-confiding investors, they seemingly realise an income, such as it is, from the business of name-lending, which in the ethics of fashion is not deemed particularly scandalous. Think of a man who lives by the wages of systematic plunder, figuring within, or upon the verges of, Mayfair, as one of the reputable of society!

But beyond this there is a loftier vision. It is a contemplation of that magnificent class of 'Promoters,' men who devise and float projects, to whom the small-minded Guinea-Pig order of beings are slavishly subservient. Among this exalted class who far and away take the shine out of Englishmen is a colony of German adventurers, who, struggling manfully away from indigence in their own country, and with abilities more intellectually acute and varied than morally sensitive, carry all before them in the profound art of money-making, no doubt to the extreme disgust of their more soberly disposed countrymen. Their names may sound harsh to English ears, and not very suitable 'to conjure with,' but what more easy than to change a name in adaptation to ordinary conceptions? The German names are accordingly anglicised, and for the most part in that ingenious way that preserves the initial letters. Change of name may not in special cases be unreasonable. It is, however, a very different thing if names are altered for certain purposes connected with the floating of questionable schemes on the Stock Exchange, in which Germans happen to be peculiarly proficient.

To this race of enterprising foreigners, England has offered a favourable field of operation. The floating of foreign loans has obviously been brought to a high state of perfection under their auspices, in conjunction with the facility for deception on the Stock Exchange. There is, however, another species of flotation in which Promoters, native and foreign, shew a masterly dexterity. This consists in the art of floating Joint-stock Companies (Limited). Therein lies a perpetually welling spring of financial manipulation.

Plain ordinary business requiring painstaking industry, such as we are accustomed to, is pronounced to be slow, humdrum, and contemptible. The right thing to do is to get hold of a decent steady-going concern, and transform it into a Joint-stock Company (Limited), and by the operation clear fifty thousand pounds at a whip. One may ask how this magical result is to be effected. The answer is simple. Taking advantage of the profusion of capital seeking investment, Promoters issue a flauntingly seductive Prospectus, offering the concern in shares; they get names to father the company as directors, which it is not difficult to do in the well-replenished market of titled Name-lenders, and the thing is done. The shares being taken up and paid for, the Promoters complacently walk off with the plunder. What is to be the reputation or the fate of the Joint-stock Company (Limited), which has thus been floated from pure greed of gain, is a matter of indifference. The end has been gained. The plunder has been safely pocketed.

That is what is styled doing business smartly, and in a way worthy of the age. The invention, as is well known, is American. Primarily, it had in view the co-operation of men with small means; but from this simple aim and organisation it has very much passed into the hands of skilled manipulators, by whose avaricious and scandalous performances, aided by name-lending, it has been grievously outraged. We would by no means say that the plan of Joint-stock Companies (Limited) is universally to be held up to derision and obloquy; but all who read the daily newspapers must know that what we have faintly pictured is too truly borne out by facts. That the more odious of this class of proceedings are greatly facilitated by persons notably respectable lending their names as directors or trustees, is unhappily beyond dispute. We have it in evidence in one of the painful cases brought into public notice, that a lady was induced to venture hundreds of pounds simply on the grounds that a clergyman whom she named was avowedly one of the trustees of the concern. One cannot but wonder at the credulity of investors in taking for gospel all that is put forth in Prospectuses. Blinded by greed, they rush onward to ruin. Their weakness, however, does not extenuate the Name-lenders who have been mainly the cause of their misfortune. In the case just instanced, the clergyman whose name acted as a decoy cannot, if he has a spark of conscience, fail to suffer the pangs of remorse for having aided in the robbery of his fellow-creatures. He was mistaken. That, presumably, is his excuse. But it is no excuse at all. He ought not on any account to have verified with his name that which was, on the face of it, ridiculous, and could on no proper grounds be substantiated. He has, in short, been as surely guilty of a moral wrong as if he had led the blind into a pit.

Whether the Legislature will be invoked to remedy the prodigious abuses incidental to the form of joint-stock partnership we speak of, seems to be doubtful. Certainly, from recent revelations in the course of proceedings before the Lord Mayor and otherwise, it is time that some effective remedy should be applied. Meanwhile, what strikes us with astonishment is the countenance given by some of the higher classes of society to the whole fraternity of Name-lenders and Promoters—apparently

from no other reason than that they live in splendid mansions and give splendid entertainments. A reform in this particular is admitted to be as much wanted as legislative interference. W. C.

FALLEN FORTUNES.

CHAPTER XXIII.—A PATRONESS.

If any one could have proved to demonstration—could have brought it home to her—that Mrs Campden of Riverside had committed even so much as a peccadillo, she would have been astonished with a great astonishment. It was true, whenever she went to church—and she went thither with the utmost regularity—that she called herself, or permitted the clergyman to call her, without remonstrance, a miserable sinner. But those words are always used, or at least applied by those who hear them, in a certain parliamentary sense. Mrs Campden often thought herself miserable, but never a sinner. She could thank Heaven—people had heard her do it—that she had always done her duty in that elevated station of life to which it had pleased Providence to call her. She supported the rector, she patronised the curate, she was affable to the doctor; she not only, as I have said, went to church herself, but was the cause of going thither in others; the bread and blankets which she distributed in sufficient quantities at Christmas were reserved for those poor folks alone who attended the parish church: she did not heap coals upon the heads of those undeserving ones who attended chapel, or resisted the temptations of all places of worship equally; her right hand knew very well what her left hand was about, and neither indulged in indiscriminate almsgiving. Whatever she did, as she had justly boasted to her husband, she did upon principle—and also what she left undone. If she did not command respect, she was at least eminently respectable. That she had once inspired love in a man like George Campden was one of those inexplicable social phenomena at which we stand astonished as at a conjurer's trick; the thing has happened, for we have seen it with our eyes, but how, in the name of wonder, did it come about? Don't we see, every day, genial, good-natured men tied for life to abominable women—scolds, grumblers, affected dolls, viragos; as we see—though much more rarely—charming women mated with dullards or scoundrels. Opportunity, a limited range of choice, a pique, must be, as old Burton says, 'causes.' If there was no other class of woman in the world but that—unhappily a large one—to which Mrs Campden belonged, and if the responsibility of carrying on the human race rested with myself alone, the world would come to an end; I would never marry. If she importuned me, I should reply: 'Madam, I must decline the temptation—upon principle.' Fortunately, tastes differ; and this class of woman does get married. I believe I know—though I have not the courage to write it—how it is done.

Of course Mrs Campden was jealous of her husband; and since he gave her no cause in the way of flirtations, she grudged him his friendships. She had accused him a hundred times of letting John Dalton 'come between her and him.' When a man marries, she gave him to understand, he should cleave to his wife, and cast off all old entanglements of every description; and how he

could sit in the smoking-room talking over old times with his friend—she had no high opinion of college life, and called them ‘humiliating antecedents’—in place of retiring at a reasonable hour in well-principled company, was inexplicable to her. Of Mrs Dalton she was jealous in another way: it was impossible that the most jaundiced eye could find fault with Edith’s manner, which was the perfection of gentleness and sweetness; but she was envious of her popularity. She could not say that she laid herself out to secure the affections of her host; but she resented her winning them, all the same, as she resented her winning those of everybody else. It was wormwood to her to be obliged to confess to herself, that not only in her own household, but in ‘the county’—where, above everything, she wished to shine pre-eminent—Mrs Dalton was by far the greater favourite. Lady Wapshot had actually complimented her—Mrs Campden—upon her being able, summer after summer, to secure such charming guests as the Daltons at Riverside. ‘They are certainly the most striking family—quite too delightful,’ had been her ladyship’s verdict. ‘I am told, that except Lord Clarendon, Mr Dalton is the very best—what do you call it?—*raconteur*. I confess I am quite in love with him. Then his wife, who I should be afraid is a little consumptive, is so sweet. And then Kitty—I assure you that last season, I have been informed, Kate Dalton might have’—and then she had whispered into Mrs Campden’s ear the rumour of a very magnificent *parti* indeed.

‘I don’t believe it,’ answered that lady, a little rudely, considering the rank of her companion, and her own veneration for it; ‘at least, I can hardly credit it.’

‘You may do so, however, for I had it upon the very best authority: the very best, Mrs Campden—*his own*.’

Mrs Campden did not believe it any the more for this audacious corroboration; but the fact that such a story should have got abroad, and be repeated by such a person as Lady Wapshot, shewed what a sensation Kitty Dalton must have made.

Now, Mary Campden, though a little older, had ‘come out’ in the same season as Kate, and had fallen, metaphorically speaking, rather flat. It was no wonder, then, that the maternal heart was sore as respected her child’s successful rival.

As to Jenny, Mrs Campden thought there was ‘a great deal too much fuss made about that girl and her ailments;’ she could not help being an invalid, of course; but she should bow to the dispensations of Providence, and since it had pleased it to afflict her, she should *be* afflicted; not come into society upon a spring-couch, and carry on conversation on her back, in such a curious and alarming manner. Tony was little more than a child, and Mrs Campden did not take much notice of children; but from what she had seen of the boy, and his affection for Geoffrey Derwent, she regarded him with little favour.

Thus it happened that Mrs Campden—who had no great love, I think, for anybody save one individual—‘I can only place my love,’ she used to say, ‘where I feel respect;’ and then she would stroke and straighten herself in a very self-appreciative manner—entertained a feeling that was almost hostile towards her guests, the Daltons. She would indeed have been shocked if any one had suggested

that she rejoiced in their ruin; but since it had pleased Heaven to thus afflict them, she was not one to find fault with its dispensations. Whether her husband had appealed to her or not, she would undoubtedly have assisted them; but the pleasure that she professed to derive from it was not that of doing good, but of conferring a favour—perhaps even an obligation. She was certainly not displeased at suddenly finding herself in a superior social position to the woman whom every one pronounced perfection, and whose daughter had cut out her own in London society. If the misfortunes of our friends give us pleasure, is it to be expected that those of our enemies—of those at least with whom we have any cause of quarrel—should not be grateful to us! Undoubtedly, too, Uncle George’s well-meant intercession had done his clients harm. The only contest with her husband in which Mrs Campden had been worsted—had been silenced by the great guns of his passion—was upon the Daltons’ account; and she was not a woman to easily forgive those who had been, however innocently, the cause of such a disgrace.

She did not acknowledge, even to herself, that such was the state of her feelings; but over her hard and bitter nature, there had suddenly grown, as respected her unhappy guests, a hard and bitter rind. It would have been difficult for some of them to have touched her heart with pity in any case, but it had now become impenetrable to all.

‘Mamma, may I come in?’ cried Mary, in tones of quite unaccustomed flurry and excitement, and not even waiting for an answer, she came quickly into the room.

‘What is the matter, my child?’ was the quiet reply.

‘O mamma, such a dreadful thing has happened, such a shocking misfortune! Dear Katy has just been telling me that—that they are all ruined;’ and the girl broke into a sob, overcome by genuine sorrow for her unhappy cousins.

‘It is very sad, of course, my dear Mary—very sad,’ said Mrs Campden, smoothing the folds of her dress as she sat in her chair, while Mary stood in tears by the mantelpiece; ‘but I cannot say it is altogether unexpected. I suppose Katy did not tell you how it happened?’

‘Well, yes. It seems Cousin John’—

‘You mean Mr Dalton,’ interrupted her mother. ‘It is not on *his* side of the house, remember, that we are related to the family.’

‘Well, it seems he was taken in by some wicked people in a speculation. But, however, it matters little now, since they have lost all their money.’

‘Pardon me, my child; it matters a good deal. There are higher things in the world—as I have sometimes occasion to tell your father—than pounds, shillings, and pence. All persons who speculate are wicked; and as for their being taken in, that is what the people who lose are always ready to say. Of course, Katy would not tell you—perhaps she does not know—how much Mr Dalton is to blame in the matter; but I know. My dear, that man is a scoundrel!’

‘O mamma! Cousin John a scoundrel! That is impossible. We are all so fond of him, from papa down to the very servants.’

‘The friendship of the world, my child, we have the best authority for knowing, is not a proof of good principles.’

‘Well, he is going away—at once—to Brazil,’

answered Mary, with a fresh access of grief. Brazil seemed to the girl so far away, that the sentiment *Nisi bonum* applied to it, as to the grave itself. 'Katy says her mother is almost broken-hearted; and if you could have seen Katy herself just now, while she was telling me— O mamma, fancy if papa was going to Brazil!'

'I hope, my dear, your father will never put himself under the necessity of going to any such place,' returned Mrs Campden with dignity. 'I am not reproving you for exhibiting such sincere sorrow—on the contrary, it does you credit; but you should learn to put a little more restraint upon your feelings. After all, it is principle alone, remember, that should guide our actions.'

'But if Mr Dalton has acted ever so wrongly, what have his wife and children to do with it? We should pity them the more, since it is surely all the worse for them to feel that he is to blame; though, for my part, I can't think such bad things of Cousin John. I am much rather inclined to believe that that stiff, hard-eyed Mr Holt is at the bottom of it all.'

'My dear Mary, I cannot listen to this,' said her mother, rising majestically. 'Whatever we say or do, let us above all things be charitable. For all we know, Mr Holt may be a very respectable person; Mr Dalton—if that goes for anything—always said he was, in his own sphere of life. He has nothing but his character to maintain him; so, pray, be careful what you say. It is very unlikely, I must also take leave to say, that so very clever a man as Mr Dalton is allowed to be, should allow himself to be taken in by anybody. However, as you were about to say, Heaven forbid that we should visit his crimes upon the heads of his unfortunate wife and children! Of course, they will have to give up their house in London—which will make us later, by-the-bye, in going to town than usual—and live in a totally different way, in lodgings somewhere.'

'They are going to live in Sanbeck, mamma; that is the one bit of good news in the whole black budget. Old Mr Landell is dead, and his house is to be let—"The Nook," you know—and they are all thinking of living there while Cousin John is away. It was that dear Dr Curzon who suggested it; and won't it be delightful?'

'I can't tell that, my dear,' returned Mrs Campden with gravity, 'till I have seen how matters turn out.'

'But, at all events, mamma, we shall be able to see much more of them at Sanbeck than if they were up in town—and to do much more for them. Why, Kitty and I can run over and see one another any afternoon; and they can come and dine with us as often as they please.'

'My poor child, in your haste to be all that is kind,' said Mrs Campden, kissing her daughter's forehead, 'you lose sight of what is practicable. Your cousins will soon be very poor: they could not come over the crags to dinner at night, but must drive round by the road; and how are they to afford a horse and fly?'

'A horse and fly!' repeated Mary lugubriously. If her mother had said 'a one-horse hearse,' it would scarcely have been a more melancholy suggestion. There were two little old maids from the county town—the Misses Bilger, daughters of Sir Robert Bilger, Baronet, who had ruined himself by keeping the county foxhounds, and whose memory,

therefore, gave a certain aroma of consideration to his offspring; and these shabby-genteel spinsters used to call once a year or so at Riverside, in a one-horse fly. A more graphic description of actual poverty could scarcely have been given to Mary than this reference to that dreary vehicle which for the future her cousins would not be able to afford to hire. It brought their utter ruin home to her imagination for the first time. 'Surely, mamma, we could send a carriage for them,' said she presently, yet feeling, even before her mother's reply, that even that step would not meet all the exigencies of the case.

'Of course we could, my dear, and no doubt we should do so occasionally; but people don't like using other people's carriages, especially when they cannot afford to give a fee to the coachman. There is a sense of obligation'—

'O mamma! what! with us?'

'I think you will find it so, my dear, unless I have quite misread Mrs Dalton's character. Whatever we do for her and hers must be done very delicately; and I have a plan in my head, which, without making them seem indebted to anybody, will be of the greatest help to them—indeed, will go a good way to restore what Mr Dalton has so wickedly squandered.'

'Oh, what is it?' cried Mary, clapping her plump hands, and quite forgetting, in her joy at the prospect of this remedy for his woes, to protest against the condemnation of her cousin. 'How nice of you, dear mamma, to have hit upon it.'

'It was only my duty to cast about for any help for these poor people,' returned Mrs Campden modestly; 'but as for the plan itself, that must remain a secret until I find an opportunity for getting it carried out.—Where is Mrs Dalton, my dear? I almost think she might have come to me herself, under circumstances so momentous.'

'Indeed, mamma, I think she is hardly equal to doing that: Kitty says she is sure she is only keeping up by a great effort. But if you would go and speak to her in her own room, I am sure she would take it kindly.'

'Then, of course, I will go, my dear,' answered Mrs Campden, rising; 'in cases of trouble such as this, it is not for a person in my position to stand upon etiquette. My cousins will find me exactly the same in every respect as though this misfortune had not occurred to them.'

As the good lady had no suspicion in her own mind but that this was a very commendable observation, it is to be hoped that it was credited to her as such in the celestial ledger; and it is but fair to add that, though never more conscious of her position in the 'county' than at that moment, she had never felt more truly affable. If you had heard her hesitating knock at Mrs Dalton's chamber-door, you would have thought it was that of a country maid who had not yet acquired confidence in her intercourse with her superiors; and the voice in which she said 'Cousin Edith, may I come in?' was the voice of a poor relation and dependant rather than of the mistress of the house—and the situation. The knock and the voice were, however, sufficiently recognisable within to send the two girls flying into Jenny's room, so that when Mrs Campden entered, she found her kinswoman and guest alone. That she had been weeping, the incomer could perceive with a half-glance, but there

were no tears in her eyes now; indeed, her wan grave face wore a smile as she rose up to meet her hostess—a gentle smile, yet not one of pleading, still less of apology or humiliation. If she and hers had been ruined by her husband's rashness, that was no business of other people, and least of all of people who looked on her husband with disfavour. She was of too fine a nature to take it for granted that her cousin had any such notion in her mind at such a moment, yet she could not forget the conversation they had held but yesterday together on board the yacht, and the expressions of opinion which had fallen from Mrs Campden respecting a certain supposititious state of affairs, which had since been actually realised. If one word of reproach against John should fall now from Mrs Campden's lips, his wife would well know how to defend him. If she were told now that he was without excuse, she would reply, that he did not need excuse, since all those who had any right to look for one were satisfied.

It was curious that so quiet and sweet a face should say all this in bidding another woman welcome, but it did say so, and that so plainly, that her visitor perceived it on the instant, and altered her whole tactics; changed front in the face of the enemy. She had intended to be patronising; but now she touched another spring in her mental machinery—which was arranged in a very handy and simple manner—and became sentimental on the spot. She began to gush.

'My darling Edith!' cried she, embracing her; 'this news has overwhelmed me quite.'

'Indeed, Julia, I hope not,' smiled the other, returning her caress, though with a little less of demonstration. 'We have had a crushing blow, but it has not prostrated us, and I hope it will not bear more hardly on our friends.'

'Ah, my dear, you are so courageous. I always said you would be the bravest of women, if a necessity arose for your being brave; though, of course, I could not foresee what a misfortune was in store for you. It is a comfort, indeed, to see you so steadfast; my only fear is that it is the excitement which keeps you up, and that, when that has passed away, and the dull sense of calamity settles down upon you— But there, why should we anticipate such a misfortune?'

'Why, indeed, Julia? Only, you should rather say, Why should you? for indeed I, for my part, have no intention of succumbing, as you suggest. The children'—her voice sank a little here—'have quite made up their minds to make the best of it; indeed, their cheerful submission to what will without doubt be a hard and unlooked-for fate, tells me how much we have yet to be thankful for.'

'And your husband, I hear, is going to Brazil?'

That was a deadly thrust; only a woman hard of heart and reckless of tongue could have given such a stab as that, just because she had found independence where she had expected submission. The opportunity had been chosen with devilish sagacity; she had struck at the moment when the other was weakened by that reference to her children. Even that bosom, guarded as it was by its brass of 'principle' and pride, felt a touch of natural pity as she saw the colour fade from the other's cheek; the haggard look of each delicate feature, as the shadow of the coming woe fell over it; the sense of devastation and despair.

'Yes,' answered Mrs Dalton in a low faint voice, such as tortured martyrs use who are asked upon the rack to deny their faith, and will not; 'my dear husband has to leave us: that will be the hardest thing of all.'

'But let us hope he will soon return,' said Mrs Campden cheerfully. She must indeed have been touched by the other's agony, or else she would surely never have expressed such an aspiration. 'A voyage in these days, even to Brazil, is a mere nothing. You will be occupied too—and nothing makes time pass like occupation—in getting into your new house. I have just heard that you are all thinking of becoming our neighbours at the Nook. I may truly say, in that case, so far as we are concerned, that "it is an ill wind that blows nobody good."'

'You are very kind,' said Mrs Dalton, though she did not think so. It was borne in, even upon her gentle spirit, that no true sympathy was being administered to her. The conventional phrase, the rapid stream of talk—the continuity designed to preclude any interchange of genuine feeling—the tone and manner of the speaker, all convinced her of this; yet she was grateful for such civility as was expressed, and also perhaps not displeased that the other's condolences wore such an everyday garb, since it was not necessary for her to play the hypocrite in acknowledging them.

'You will stay here, of course,' continued Mrs Campden, 'until your arrangements for entering upon your new house are completed.'

'I fear that will make some trespass on your hospitality, Julia: we are rather a large party,' said Mrs Dalton, hesitating. As a matter of fact, since her hostess had often importuned her to make a longer stay before returning to town, she had taken this offer for granted; she had not understood how, in the case of such old friends, a reverse of fortune should place their mutual relations on another basis, far less that they should commence anew.

'Don't speak of trespass, my dear Edith. In an establishment like ours, a few persons more or less make no appreciable difference; while to put off our going to London for a week or two would really make no difference to us worth mentioning.'

This was perfectly true—if it is necessary to say so of any speech made by a person of such high principles as Mrs Campden; it certainly would make no difference, as the departure of herself and her husband for town was to be delayed, in any case, for a month to come. It was only Mary who had been going up at once with the Daltons.

'From what Dr Curzon tells us,' said Mrs Dalton, 'I think we might be able to take up our quarters in the Nook within three weeks. John thinks it would not be necessary for me to return to Cardigan Place; but he will run up there to-morrow, and make arrangements for the sale, and—and for securing his berth on board the vessel. It is very hard to be parted from him just now, when he is so soon to leave me; but my accompanying him would cost money, and I don't feel justified'—

'You are quite right,' broke in Mrs Campden approvingly; 'one can't begin the work of retrenchment too soon. I am so glad—though I quite expected it—to find you so wise and prudent in this matter. I dare say, my dear Edith,' added she, dropping her voice, 'you have had the courage

to look not only the present in the face, but the future also.'

'Of course, I have thought of the future—God help me! how could I help thinking of it?' answered Mrs Dalton, with just the least touch of bitterness. These platitudes of the prosperous woman were growing almost insupportable to her. 'Do you suppose that I have not reflected how ten days hence, I must stand alone in the world, with my poor children clinging to me?'

'Just so; it is about the children—at least one of them—that I was thinking.'

'O yes; about dear Tony,' said Mrs Dalton, brightening up. 'I ought to have thanked you for your husband's kind intentions to him. His offer to send him to Eton was most generous, and has of course been gratefully accepted by us.'

'To Eton!' said Mrs Campden quickly.

'Yes. Was it not just like your husband's kindness? What! has he not told you? But that is like him too. He would conceal his generous acts, if it was possible, even from his wife herself.'

'Yes, Edith, it is all very like George, as you were saying,' observed her hostess gravely; 'he is impulsive and lavish enough, goodness knows—Pray, don't imagine,' added she, as she saw the colour rush into her companion's face, 'that I could grudge anything my husband did for you and yours. He should send Tony to Eton, by all means—if it would benefit the boy; but consider—with his altered prospects—how unsuitable such an arrangement would be. I for my part should consider it a positive cruelty. The poor boy would only imbibe a taste for luxury that could never be gratified, and make acquaintances from whom circumstances must always separate him in after-life.'

'There is much, of course, to be said on that side of the question,' returned Mrs Dalton coldly (the word 'lavish' had wounded her to the quick, and if she had followed her own impulses, she would have declined all offers for Tony's benefit upon the spot); 'but on the other hand, John has many friends who have sons at Eton, and he thinks it would be well, if he himself must needs drop out of the sphere in which he has always moved, that the connection should be maintained through Tony, for the boy's sake. Fortune may smile upon us, even now'—

'My dear Edith,' interrupted Mrs Campden, 'most earnestly do I hope it will. But let us not be the victims of illusion; an expensive and fashionable school like Eton—unless, indeed, the lad is to be a collegier; of course, if it is proposed to place him on the foundation, that is quite another matter.'

'I understand it was Mr Campden's intention, Julia, to place him in the same position as that he would have occupied if this misfortune had not befallen us,' Mrs Dalton's tone was calm, but her heart was failing; she had no false pride; but she well knew that the life on which poor Tony had set his heart—which it was such an inexpressible comfort to have heard that Uncle George's kindness had secured for him—was not such as is passed by boys on the foundation; the letters he had had from his young friends at that seat of learning had enlightened her upon that point; above all, he was delicate, and there were hardships to be endured by 'collegers,' to which 'opidans' were not exposed. It was foolish of her, of

course, to entertain such a predilection, but it must be remembered that she was a woman and a mother.

'Then, I must confess, Edith, I think my husband's offer has been very injudicious,' observed Mrs Campden confidently. She was thoroughly aware of her companion's reasons—if they could be called so—for her opinion, and would have entertained it herself, had their places been reversed; so that she was able to rebut her arguments without their having been stated—a great advantage in all discussions. 'I have always heard,' continued she, 'that collegers are just as well born and as well bred as others, only their parents have but moderate means. Surely, my dear Edith, it will be among these that Anthony' (the idea of shortening names 'for love and euphony' was repugnant to Mrs Campden) 'will find his more suitable place; and though, doubtless, an opidan's life is the more luxurious, is it judicious to allow a poor boy to be petted and pampered for a year or two, who will afterwards have to make his own way in the world and rough it?'

The mistress of Riverside had always confidence in her own view of affairs, but it was not always, as in this case, that the strength of the argument did really lie upon her side. Her opponent, too, was secretly conscious that it did so; perhaps the strongest motive she had had for accepting Mr Campden's offer on behalf of Tony was that, for the present, one member of her family at least should have no cause to drink of the cup of bitterness that must needs be the portion of all the rest. Why should the smile be banished from the face of her beautiful boy, since it could be kept there, perhaps, till smiles returned to all of them?

'I am sure you perceive the reasonableness of what I have pointed out,' continued Mrs Campden, clasping her hands in triumphant superiority, and regarding her victim, with head aside, like a magpie who has just picked another bird's eye out.

'Perhaps we had better leave the question of the boy's schooling to our husbands,' sighed Mrs Dalton; 'I think men know more about such matters than we do.'

Mrs Campden smiled a scornful smile. She had always despised her companion for having neither a proper spirit nor a will of her own; but this open acknowledgment of inferiority to the opposite sex was in her eyes something worse than contemptible.

'Well, well, my dear, we will discuss this matter another time. To benefit your boy will be only one of our pleasures as respects you and yours. I hope I shall be able to do something, and much more than this, for—another.'

Mrs Dalton looked up quickly with inquiring eyes. There had been an unmistakable significance in the tone of her hostess. It was clear that she had some particular benefit in her mind, or a benefit to some particular person. Her face was indicative of a certain sense of her own sagacity, which announced a plan fixed and approved, and her eager eyes evinced her desire to communicate it.

Yet, so far from giving her any encouragement, Mrs Dalton replied, a little hurriedly: 'You are very good, I'm sure, Julia. I have promised to see Dr Curzon again before he goes about the Nook; so perhaps you will excuse me for a few moments;' and without further apology, she quitted the room.

'I think she guessed what I was going to say,' mused Mrs Campden grimly, when she found herself alone. 'I am afraid she has a weak nature to thus shrink from a subject simply because it is disagreeable. It must, however, be discussed sooner or later; and at all events, I have put a spoke in the wheel of that young gentleman's being sent to Eton at our expense. I never heard of such unprincipled folly. It could not be done under a hundred and fifty pounds a year at the very least; but when people get poor, they immediately begin to think that all their friends are made of money.'

GREAT GUNS AND ARMOUR-PLATING.

THE 'wooden walls' of Old England are declared to be wholly useless for naval attack or defence. Nothing will now do but vessels coated with thick iron plates, and carrying guns of enormous dimensions. Very good; but here comes the dilemma. Some other nations are just as able and disposed to adopt these ponderous and costly novelties as England. And, in point of fact, there is now going on an extraordinary rivalry as to who shall have the thickest armour-plated war-vessels and the biggest engines of destruction. It is altogether a queer struggle, dating from about the time of the Crimean War, when guns of large size began to be experimentally made, before there were suitably strong ships ready to receive them. Nasmyth's big gun was the talk of its time; Horsfall's gun was looked upon as a marvel, because it could fire a ball of two hundred and eighty pounds through four and a quarter inches of iron; and Clay's gun triumphed with a three-hundred-pound shot. Then came the beautiful inventions of Sir William Armstrong and Sir Joseph Whitworth, carrying the art of gun-construction to a degree of perfection never before attained. Next occurred the American Civil War, which startled our Admiralty by shewing that no ship whatever, unless thickly jacketed with plates of iron, could resist the shots fired by the *Monitor* class of vessels. Therefore, we rushed into two expensive adventures at once—building *Monitors* armed with a small number of very heavy guns; and clothing a large number of our ships, some timber-built and some iron-built, with armour-plates. As, happily, we have not had to fight any great naval battle for twenty years, we could not try our big guns against an enemy's ships; and, therefore, targets were built up for the shot to bang away upon. Meanwhile, the navy yards were required to construct ships of war that would carry the largest guns mechanical skill could produce, and the thickest armour-plates that Sheffield could send forth. So matters have gone on year after year; ships, guns, shot, and armour-plates aiding in the struggle to determine whether the attacking power can be made greater than the defensive, or the defensive greater than the attacking.

Loud was the jubilation when, after the construction of several half-clad ships of the *Warrior* class, the Admiralty set afloat three fully plated iron-clads of the *Minotaur* class, with the enormous length of four hundred feet. It was fondly believed that no fighting-ships in the world would ever excel these. Experience shewed, however, that such very long ships are not handy for steering

and turning; and the Admiralty adopted a shorter standard for the *Hercules* and *Bellerophon*. Then came Captain Cowper Coles's revolving turrets in which to place the guns, instead of ranging them broadside. Then the announcement by Sheffield firms that, by rolling instead of hammering, they could produce armour-plates tougher and thicker than any before known. Then the completion of magnificent arrangements at Woolwich whereby the Fraser guns (a modification of the Armstrong) could be made of vast size and enormous strength, on account of being wholly wrought, not cast. The 'Woolwich Infant' has become a favourite epithet for the monster gun of the present day; and a most extraordinary sight was presented to the Czar of Russia, when he visited our great arsenal in 1874, in the 'Infant School,' where were ranged a selection from all the great modern guns that Woolwich could shew.

And so matters went on stage by stage—ships, armour, guns, and shot becoming alike larger and more powerful—until the momentous days of the *Devastation* arrived. Men really did think that at length we had arrived at such a pitch of destructive and defensive force combined, that further progress would hardly be sought. We shall see presently how far this supposition was correct; meanwhile it may be well to give some account of the points of difference between this famous iron-clad and those that preceded it.

Towards the close of 1869, the First Lord of the Admiralty, with all the pomp that usually distinguishes such a ceremony, laid the first keel-piece of the *Devastation* at Portsmouth. The theory of very long iron-clads had gone so much out of favour, that the length of the *Devastation* was settled at two hundred and eighty-five feet—more than a hundred feet shorter than some of its predecessors; the breadth sixty-two feet, rather more than one-fifth of the length. Its displacement—that is, the weight of the water which it displaces—exceeds nine thousand tons; and the steam-engines are capable of working up to six thousand horse-power. An ugly affair it is, without any masts proper, having a mass of ironwork on deck which would have puzzled Nelson or Howe beyond measure. This ironwork marks the strange changes which have been made in the arrangement of the armament of such vessels. The earlier iron-clads were broadsides, with a horizontal row of big guns peeping out on each side. Then came the revolving turret on a flat ship rising but a very little way above the surface of the water—a 'cheese-box on a raft,' as some one called it, with two enormous guns mounted in the 'cheese-box.' After various modifications and combinations of the broadside and the turret, Mr Reed, the Chief Constructor for the navy, introduced something new in the *Devastation*. There is a kind of armoured wall inclosing a space in the middle of the upper deck; the space occupies nearly three-fourths of the length, and one-half the breadth of the entire area of the deck, and the iron wall around it is seven or eight feet high. Within this space are two turrets or circular towers, and various structures and gangways connected with the navigation of the ship and the accommodation of the officers and crew. Each turret rotates, not on a central spindle, but on numerous rollers which work on the deck; and each, thirty feet in diameter,

contains two 'Woolwich Infants' of formidable character. No wonder that the entire mass has been compared to 'a raft with a heavy deck-load in the centre.' Upwards of twenty steam-engines are provided for working the ship in various ways.

We have said little yet about its armour and armament. When the *Devastation* had been a few months in hand, the nation was distressed by the loss of the costly turret-ship *Captain*, with all hands—including Captain Coles himself; and the Admiralty caused a thorough investigation to be made into the probable merits of the different classes of iron-clad. The result was favourable to the *Devastation*; but certain changes of plan were deemed desirable. When laid down, it was believed that the armour would resist the shot of a twenty-five-ton gun, the largest at that time ventured on in any navy; but improved gun-powder, in cubes, called 'pebble-powder,' had so increased the velocity and force of the shot as to render greater resisting power necessary, and so the *Devastation* was clothed with armour no less than twelve inches in thickness, carried down five feet below the water-line; the turrets have armour averaging thirteen inches thick; while the wall or breast-work around the inclosed space on deck is also formed of armour-plates. Compare this with the five-inch armour of the once-mighty *Warrior* and *Minotaur*, and we see what a stride has been made; no wonder that such a ship displaces nine thousand tons of water! Two guns of thirty-five tons were planned for each turret; but by introducing hydraulic gear for moving the turrets and their contents, thirty-eight-ton guns have been introduced—the heaviest adopted down to the time at which we are writing, with a twelve-inch bore, carrying a seven-hundred-pound shot. The *Thunderer* and the *Devastation* are sister-ships (if such savage monsters deserve to be called by so gentle a name as sister); and with alterations gradually made, they are approaching the maximum of twelve-inch armour at the sides, fourteen-inch armour around the turrets, carrying two guns in each turret, the guns thirty-eight tons weight, twelve and a half inches calibre, firing shot of eight hundred pounds.

And now, what do we hear? Woolwich pooh-poohs her own thirty-eight-ton 'Infants,' and is bringing others into existence more than double the weight—namely, eighty-one tons—a hundred and eighty thousand pounds of iron and steel in each gun! If told that these will cost five thousand pounds per gun, need we marvel?

When anything goes wrong in life, we are prone to ask who's to blame; and when told that the thirty-eight-ton gun is now looked down upon, a similar question suggests itself to the sorely perplexed tax-payer who has to provide the money for all these luxuries. The truth appears to be, that armour-plate makers can now go very far beyond the twelve inches of thickness that was lately their maximum; and that unless armour is eventually to defeat guns and shot, the Woolwich Infants must be more Brobdingnagian than ever. And so we come to the *Inflexible*, destined to be released into the water by the fair hands of a princess. This mighty ship will be double-screw, double-turret, with a load displacement exceeding eleven thousand tons. The length between the perpendiculars, three hundred and twenty feet, and breadth seventy-five feet (almost

equal to one-fourth of the length). Each turret will carry two guns of eighty-one tons, twenty-seven feet long, and sixteen inches bore, firing a shot of twelve hundred and fifty pounds! Those in the secret assert that such a shot, coming from such a gun, and fired with the improved gun-powder now manufactured, will have an impact or momentum equal to the whole ramming force of the *Iron Duke* that ran down the luckless *Vanguard*. The steel tube that forms the innermost part of each gun excels in size every single piece until now made, being twenty-five feet long, and twenty-five inches external diameter. When coil upon coil of tough iron have been wound round the middle and breech of this steel tube, the exterior diameter will vary from twenty-five inches to six feet. The government pay Messrs Firth of Sheffield sixteen hundred pounds for the solid mass of steel to make one inner tube, the boring-out being done at Woolwich. It was last September that the first of these huge guns was tried in the marshes at Woolwich; how long a time must elapse before all four will be ready to be mounted in the *Inflexible*, the future must shew.

When we are told that the original estimate for the hull and engines of the *Inflexible* was five hundred and twenty thousand pounds, and that the armament and fittings are not included; and when we bear in mind that the actual outlay always exceeds the estimates in these matters—we may guess, if we can, how far this ship will go to affect the pockets of John Bull.

Have we even now come to the end of this costly contest between the attacking and the defensive power of ships of war, this rivalry between guns and armour-plates? Engineers and naval constructors do not believe in any such finality. Their fertile brains are teeming with new schemes—more especially on the part of the makers of great guns, who manifest an increased confidence that they can more than keep pace with any increase in the thickness of armour-plates. Russia has established a naval arsenal at Nicolaieff, near the mouth of one of the rivers flowing into the Black Sea, where iron-clads of the largest dimensions can be constructed; and she has also provided herself with a factory in which great guns and ponderous armour-plates can be fabricated. Indeed, we owe to Russia (for good or for bad) the incentive to the planning of the eighty-one-ton gun. The *Peter the Great* (an appropriate name for the Czar's mightiest ship) has been planned to carry twenty-inch armour, at a time when a shot from our thirty-five-ton guns could only penetrate a fourteen-inch plate. What was to be done? Woolwich was consulted, and replied that a gun of something like eighty tons weight would be required to carry a shot which would pierce twenty inches of armour. There was no existing furnace that would heat, no existing steam-hammers that would forge the masses of iron necessary for such a mighty gun. New furnaces and new hammers were thereupon set up at a cost which we are afraid to mention; the guns are being made, and perchance—who knows?—may one day try their strength against the iron sides of *Peter the Great*. Russia has already a vessel carrying guns exceeding our *Devastation* and *Thunderer* guns—namely, the *Admiral Popoff*, the strange circular ship, with six keels, eighteen-inch armour, and two guns of forty-two tons each.

Sir W. G. Armstrong is trying his skill on a seventeen-inch gun that will carry a two-thousand-pound shot. Mr Fraser at Woolwich has broached the idea of a one-hundred-and-sixty-ton gun, to carry a shot of two thousand two hundred and forty pounds, with such velocity as to smash in the side of any ordinary iron-clad even at a mile distant; while Sir Joseph Whitworth, using an hexagonal bore of compressed steel, and a flat-headed elongated shot, entertains a firm belief that a gun on his construction, far less weighty than eighty-one tons, would vanquish an armour-plate even twenty-four inches in thickness.

Since writing the above, we learn that M. Krupp, the famous gun-manufacturer of Essen, has actually commenced making a monster of one hundred and sixty tons—an 'infant' double the size of those designed for the *Inflexible*. It is as well, however, to add, that no ship large enough to accommodate this piece of colossal ordnance has been as yet designed.

AN ADVENTURE ON THE CLYDE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

THERE is no luxury the Glasgow citizen values more highly than that of having a summer residence at the 'coast.' He can attend to business all day in the hot dusty city, and in one hour can be transported from the smoke of its factories, the clang of its hammers, the hurrying crowds of its busy streets, to where the dirty, narrow river has widened into a broad, beautiful estuary, whose shores are studded with many a pretty town and village and splendid mansion. There he can breathe the fresh invigorating sea-breeze, and watch it filling the sails of fairy-like yachts, and blowing about the smoke from the funnels of the steamers which sweep along, leaving long tracks of white foam on the clear blue water. He can watch the splendour of the western sunsets, when the outlines of the rugged and picturesque mountains are thrown out clear and sharp against the opal-tinted sky; when the floods of rosy light reflected from the sea, seem to fill the air with a luminous haze.

As a rule, the city man is not poetical, and perhaps is deep in the 'money article' as the setting sun sheds its glory over him; but he fully appreciates the change from the hot dusty city, and enjoys the fresh air and the laughter of his children, who, relieved from the social pressure of town-life, which is as hard on the bairns as their elders, paddle barefooted among the wavelets and the sand. So he locks up his town-house, puts brown paper in all its windows, and shaking the dust of the city from his feet every afternoon, joins his family at the seaside.

My brother and myself, being old Glasgow folks, of course conform to the usual custom; but in choosing our summer residence, we select a quiet in preference to a fashionable place, and for this reason Innellan was one of our favourites. It is a good deal changed now; and the staring plate-glass villas have increased and multiplied so that I hardly recognise the old place; but ten or fifteen years ago, its whole trade was represented by one or two shops of the omnium-gatherum sort. Its pretty white houses looked so bright and pleasant in the midst of their flower-gardens, gay with roses, tree-fuchsias and rhododendrons, with the dark background of trees, and the rugged heath-clad

hills stretching away up behind. We used to enjoy the Sundays there so much. The female element predominated rather largely during the week. Groups of bright young girls might be seen rowing about on the water, or seated on some rocky perch with novel or fancy-work; mammas sitting watching the children at play; and old maids like myself wandering about, talking of nothing in particular.

The sterner sex is, now as then, only represented by a few boys or retired old gentlemen, till the half-past five boat from Wemyss Bay brings the city men back from business. To watch the return of that boat is the great event of the day; to go to the pier to meet it, and get the gentlemen to put away their newspapers and talk, is the only excitement. But on Sunday, no early steamer sweeps up from Rothesay, warning the dilatory gentleman, by the dash of her paddles, to bolt his roll, swallow his coffee, and rush to the pier, to be carried back to the worry and toil of business. The great world, with all its cares and anxieties, is quite shut out. No railway has ever penetrated these hills behind us, no stage-coach crawls up their sides; no Sunday steamer is allowed to approach the pier; so that neither letters, telegrams, Sunday visitors, nor half-tipsy excursionists, can come across the bright waters to annoy us. We have the gentlemen all to ourselves, which of course makes a great difference. But I think the most anxious day I ever remember to have spent in my life was one Sunday at Innellan nine or ten years ago.

At that time, we (that is, my brother, his only son Tom, and myself) found ourselves located in a semi-detached villa. It had two doors in the middle, within a foot of each other, and a mutual scraper stood between. There was an oriel window on either side the doors, and a flower-garden in front, divided by a joint-stock gravel-walk; and each detachment had a mutual interest in the green, with the clothes-poles behind, where croquet was sometimes played, when people could be got to overlook such little inconveniences as ill-kept grass and ground rather on the incline. We took possession of our share of this desirable sea-side residence on the first of June; but several days passed before the other half was occupied. I began to feel a great curiosity about our future neighbours—a curiosity I made so manifest, by indulging in certain wonderments and speculations concerning them, that I laid myself open to a good deal of teasing from my nephew Tom (who, by the way, has a wonderful talent for teasing), and his first salutation, on his return from the city every evening, was: 'Well, auntie, any news of the semi-detachments?'—'What a meddling old maid you are!' he would sometimes say. 'I really believe your only reason for taking this house was that these oriel windows afford such excellent opportunities of prying into the affairs of your neighbours.'

To tell the truth, the provoking fellow was not far wrong. Though I have the very great privilege of looking after the dinners and shirt-buttons of my brother and nephew, I would have many a lonely hour, were it not that I take an interest, a kindly interest, in my neighbours. I don't care to know what they have for dinner, or what are the most glaring iniquities of their servants. I am by no means a meddling old maid; and Tom, who likes to have a monopoly of all the saucy

things said to me, would seriously resent the epithet being applied to me by any one else; but I do like to be taken into people's confidence, and to have my advice asked; and the thought did cross my mind in taking the semi-detachment—as Tom called it, though its name is Rose Villa—that it would be very nice to get friendly with the people next door. I knew nothing about them except that they were a Mr and Mrs Nisbet, from Glasgow. The landlady had told me so much when I took the house. But having very little else to think about, I thought a good deal about them, and always looked at their windows, the first thing when I returned from my walks, till the arrival of the people next door became an event of great importance in my eyes.

At last one evening, nearly a week after we came down, just as I was sitting down to a solitary cup of tea, the gate opened, and a tall, pleasant-looking gentleman entered, with a pretty, dark-eyed, rather delicate-looking young lady on his arm. 'Ah,' thought I, with a sense of disappointment, 'they are newly married people, and won't want to say anything to me. But no; here comes a girl carrying a baby, and another servant with a lot of rugs and shawls, and a porter with a barrow-load of luggage.' I was so delighted, I had almost rushed out to welcome them; but reflecting that such a proceeding must necessarily seem a little absurd, I contented myself with rubbing my hands and watching what was going on, standing back a little, that they might not see me. They looked so nice, and the baby too. Nothing could have been better. 'She will be sure to want to know what is the matter with it when it cries, and will ask my advice on hundreds of points concerning it, when she knows I have brought up such a fine young fellow as Tom.' I felt quite excited, and could not settle to take tea; a happy thought struck me. The poor young mamma looked pale and tired; perhaps I had better ask her and the baby in, and give her a cup of tea, till they get the boxes unsorted and things put straight. I did not give myself time for a second thought, but passed immediately from my own door into theirs, which stood open. The hall was full of boxes; and the lady was sitting on an easy-chair in the dining-room, wearily taking off the baby's wraps; while the husband, who had just taken off his hat and overcoat, stood wondering what he should do next. The two servant-girls were on a voyage of discovery in the back settlements, under the guidance of the woman in charge, whose voluble explanations were quite audible where I stood. I advanced a step, and said (a little timidly), for I did not know what they might think of my intrusion: 'I beg your pardon for my unceremonious entrance; but my tea is just on the table, and I thought the lady looked tired, and might be the better of a cup.'

They both looked a little surprised, as well they might, at this incoherent invitation to tea. The lady smiled, and said: 'You are very kind, I am sure!' and then looked at her husband, as if asking his opinion.

'You must think me a very strange person,' I went on hurriedly, 'to come down on you in this abrupt fashion; but I live next door. You may perhaps know my brother—Mr Mackinlay of St Vincent Street'—

'O yes,' said Mr Nisbet, interrupting me; 'I have met him on business several times. I am

delighted to make your acquaintance.' And turning to his wife, he introduced her, and told her she had better accept my kind offer.

In a very few minutes, she was sitting by my cosy dining-room fire; for it was often cold on these June evenings, and I liked the cheery blink of a fire. She was a little shy or stiff at first, and kept apologising, and wanting to relieve me of the baby; but I would not hear of it till she had taken a cup of tea. 'Indeed, you will make me feel very uncomfortable if you say any more about it. I certainly took a great liberty with you,' said I.

'Oh, don't say that,' she answered. 'You are excessively kind; but I see you will not believe I think so, unless I take the fullest advantage of it,' she continued, taking the cup in her hand with a bright smile; not the little conventional one she had favoured me with before, but a smile that lighted up her whole face.

We soon began to get quite friendly over the tea; and then there was the baby to praise, and of course I let her know how I had brought up Tom from babyhood, and was a person of some experience in the ways of babies; and so the time passed very pleasantly till she rose to go. 'I have felt so much refreshed with the tea,' she said. 'I was just sitting wishing I had a cup, when you popped in, offering it me, like a fairy in the story-books.'

'Yes,' I said, laughing, 'it was quite according to precedent that the fairy of the teapot should appear in the shape of a little old woman.'

Of course I told the whole story of the arrival to Tom and his father when they came home, including my rôle of good fairy; and Tom drew a caricature of me with a pair of wings at my back, huge spectacles on my nose, and a teapot in one hand, and a big scone in the other.

By-and-by we saw Mr Nisbet walking in the garden, smoking.

'Hollo! it is that young fellow Nisbet they have lately taken in at Ferguson and Frost the tweed-merchants in our street,' cried Tom.

'So it is,' said my brother. 'He bears a high character as a business man, and a nice young fellow into the bargain.'

'Come then, father,' said Tom, 'and let us be civil to him. We ought to let him know that the good fairy of the teapot is related to a most respectable Glasgow merchant, and has a nephew who will smoke as many pipes as he likes with him.'

I was not disappointed in my expectations with regard to Mrs Nisbet. She appeared to be as glad of my society as I was of hers. She knew no one in Innellan, and very few in Glasgow; for Mr Nisbet had been so long in London, that he had few acquaintances except business ones; and Mrs Nisbet had never been in Scotland till her marriage, about a year before. I believe she would have been very lonely when Mr Nisbet was at business, but for me, and then she had always something concerning baby to consult me about; so that we soon became great friends. She was very gay and lively too; and I used often to be amused at the way in which she would turn Tom's somewhat clumsy banter against himself, much to that young gentleman's benefit and discomfiture; for, with the absence of formality which marks one's social intercourse at the sea-side, in the course of a few days

we all got to be very friendly with each other; and not only did Mrs Nisbet and I spend our mornings together, but the evenings also were spent in each other's society, along with the gentlemen; and many a pleasant crack we had over the nightly glass of toddy. Every one has had experience of these mushroom friendships—pleasant while they last, but forgotten almost as soon as formed, as this too might have been, had it not been for an adventure, which drew out our sympathies, and turned our holiday intercourse into a strong and lasting friendship.

When we had been at Innellan about three weeks or so, Mrs Nisbet told me one morning that the next Sunday was the anniversary of her marriage, and she wanted to prepare a little surprise in the shape of a dinner, which she meant to lay out like a wedding *déjeuner*. She had brought her wedding-dress, and was going to wear it, and hoped we would not think it wrong to come and dine with them.

'It is a pity it falls on a Sunday,' she said; 'but I can't help it, you know; I was married on a Friday; and as this is leap-year, that makes the anniversary on a Sunday. I remember people saying Friday was such an unlucky day to be married on; but it has not proved so with me. John and I have never had the slightest quarrel, nor has he ever vexed me in any way. I sometimes wonder if there are many people in the world as happy as I am. The only thing I have to wish for is, that my brother Charley knew him a little better, for I sometimes fear he does not like him.'

'What does he dislike him for?' I asked.

'Oh, I don't know: he never said anything against him, but I can see he thinks him frivolous, or something. They have not been much in each other's society; but he is to be here this week, and they will get better acquainted, I hope.'

She had been talking a great deal about this visit of her brother's, whom she had not seen since her marriage, he having been abroad.

'Yes, if Charley only knew John better, I should not have a single thing to wish for; my happiness would be perfect,' went on Mrs Nisbet.

'Hush!' I said, almost involuntarily. 'It always seems ominous to hear people talk of perfect happiness.' But noticing her scared look, I hastened to reassure her, and bade her not mind an old woman's nonsense, but to let me hear all her arrangements for Sunday. I heartily regretted my unfortunate slip of the tongue, for I saw it had troubled her. The cloud soon vanished from her face, however, as we talked about her brother and about next Sunday.

'I wonder if John will forget the day?' she said; 'it would be such fun, if he did! He would be so surprised, when he and Charley returned from church, to find me in white silk, and the dinner-table all decorated with white roses. If I find that he *has* forgotten the day, I shall compel him to go through the ceremony of marrying me over again.' And so the young wife chatted on, laying her innocent little plans with all the mystery of a conspiracy.

Mr Methven, Mrs Nisbet's brother, duly arrived on the Friday afternoon, and was as duly brought in to be introduced. He looked several years older than his sister, whom he rather resembled. He

had not such a frank expression as his brother-in-law. If Mrs Nisbet had not mentioned it, perhaps I would not have noticed that there was a slight tone of contempt in his voice when he spoke to him. But we were all talking and laughing in our usual merry careless fashion, and Mr Methven's manner was not much observed. I thought he might well have trusted John Nisbet's clear honest eyes, and his voice, that had the ring of truth in it, if ever a man's voice had. I am rather given to jump at conclusions, but my brother knows that my instincts are seldom at fault. We parted, laughing and talking as usual, on the door-step. But these two men knew each other better when we were destined to meet again.

Next day was Saturday; and the Nisbets had arranged to take a trip round the Kyles of Bute in the *Iona* (prince of steamers), and we were to spend the day at Kilm. As we started rather early, driving—for there was a picnic we were expected to join—we did not see any of our neighbours before we left. It was getting late when we returned—between ten and eleven o'clock. The wind had risen, and a nasty wetting rain was blown in our faces; and we could now and then see a great shower of white spray dashed up as the waves thundered on the rocks. We were very glad, when we drove up to the gate, to see the cheerful light from our dining-room fire glancing on the wet gravel and the dark leaves of the evergreens. I noticed a white figure at Mrs Nisbet's drawing-room window, which we supposed was her, and waved a good-night; but she did not open the window or speak. We sat for about half-an-hour or so, as my brother made his usual tumbler of toddy, and then we separated, and went to bed.

After I had gone to my room, I could not help recalling Mrs Nisbet's solitary figure at the window, and wondering how she came to be sitting there alone. Just then, a timid little ring at the door-bell startled me; and hastily throwing on a dressing-gown, I ran down-stairs with the candle in my hand; and opening the door, I found Mrs Nisbet on the step looking as pale as death, and trembling all over.

'Why, what is the matter?' said I, drawing her into the dining-room, where the fire still sent a ruddy glow over the carpet.

'O Miss Mackinlay, John and Charley have never returned! You hear how stormy it is; I fear they are drowned.' And she threw herself on a chair, and covering her face with her hands, burst out sobbing as if her heart would break.

I tried all I could to soothe her; but I could not in the least understand what had happened; and she was too agitated to speak.

Presently, my brother William came down: he had heard the ring and the door opened, and he had risen to see what was the matter.

'My dear Mrs Nisbet,' said he, 'I am sorry to see you in such distress. What has happened? Can we help you in any way?'

'She fears that Mr Nisbet and Mr Methven are drowned,' I said; for Mrs Nisbet was struggling to compose herself, and could not speak yet.

'Drowned! How? Did you not go in the *Iona*, as you intended?'

'O yes,' she answered; 'we went; and got home all right about four o'clock; but this was later, when I went to put baby to bed. They thought

they would take the small boat, and go out for an hour's fishing. I said: Did they not think it a little stormy? But they said it was nothing, and they would not stay long. So I went off with baby, who was very restless, and cried a good deal; and I could not get him to sleep till after nine; and when I came down-stairs, I was surprised to find they had not returned, particularly as it was getting dark and had begun to rain. I put a shawl over my head, and ran down to the beach, to try if I could see anything of them; but there was no sign of their having returned. The boat had not been brought back, and there was nothing visible on the water; but it was getting so dark we could not see any distance. The old man we hire the boat from said it was a nasty night to be out in them wee boats; but no one could give me any information; and I have sat watching at the drawing-room window ever since.—Do you think they will ever return?' she faltered, looking at us so piteously with her large dark eyes full of tears.

'Why, yes; they will be sure to return. You have sat alone till you have made yourself nervous. There really is no reason why you should distress yourself so much,' said my brother. 'Why did you not call to us as we came in?'

'Till then,' she said, 'I expected them in every minute, and I thought it a pity to trouble you; and then, as I watched the light from your cheerful room streaming out on the darkness, I could fancy I saw you all sitting round the fire chatting and laughing, and Mr Mackinlay mixing his toddy; while the wind shook the window against which I was leaning, and howled and shrieked among trees and round the house, and I could hear the angry dash of the waves on the beach. Suddenly the thought came into my mind with all the force of a conviction, that they never would come back again, and that I would sit listening for their footsteps in darkness and sorrow, watching the light from other people's happiness, which never would shine on my life again.' Her voice sank into a low mournful wail as she finished speaking, and she leant her head and her folded arms on the table, and gave way to a fit of sobbing.

My brother and I looked at each other: we had neither of us fancied there was such depth of feeling and imagination hidden in her usually merry heart; and a line from a poem I had been reading came into my mind:

Ah, friend, I fear the lightest heart
Makes sometimes heaviest mourning.

'Come, come, Mrs Nisbet,' said my brother, 'you really must not give way like this. Think how vexed Mr Nisbet and your brother will be when they return (and they may now be on their way) to find you distressing yourself so. You will find that they will return all right. I have often heard of boats being unable to make to the shore when the sea was running high, and the tide against them; but they generally manage to run in somewhere, and get back all right.'

'But sometimes they never come back at all,' said Mrs Nisbet, with a hopeless, despairing look, that went to both our hearts.

'Sometimes not,' said my brother gravely; 'but very, very rarely. Why should you persist in looking at the darkest side? I assure you I would not bid you hope, if there were no grounds for it. I am quite sure we shall have them back to-

morrow, if not to-night, relating their adventures in the best of spirits; and I am certain their greatest trouble, at this moment, is thinking of the distress a certain lady, dear to them both, may be suffering on their account.'

A feeble little smile, like a wintry sunbeam, played for a moment on her face at these words.

'That is right,' I said. 'You must try to keep up. I am sure William is right; and I can assure you, my dear, he is not the man to delude you with false hopes. You have let your nerves get the better of you, with sitting so long alone; and the wind and the waves together appear to have played very unkindly with you, putting all sorts of dismal fancies into your head. If you had only come in, instead of sitting brooding all by yourself, your convictions would have taken a more hopeful aspect; but you see what comes of a want of neighbourliness. And now, if you will excuse me till I go up-stairs for some clothes, I will go in and stay with you, and see if we can't find a less dismal version of "What are the wild waves saying?"'

PAINTERS' PLEASURES.

EVERY toil has, more or less, its attendant pleasures. The writer weaving his story, essay, or history, would not care to exchange his occupation for any other, far less for a state of 'shapeless idleness,' any more than would the sculptor, giving to inanimate clay the semblance of palpitating life. Still less, we fancy, would the painter exchange for any other toil that with which, as with a magician's wand, he conjures up with his brush upon the blank canvas, and brings into warm breathing existence, the creatures of his brain, or the loveliest images and forms with which the face of nature teems.

Whenever we go forth upon our country jaunts, it is seldom that we light upon a pleasanter incident than one of the brethren of the brush, seated before his easel in the open air. The sight of his white umbrella in a moment excites our interest and curiosity. May it not be, too, that there is a touch of envy mingled with these feelings, after a respectful visit to his encampment? Nearly all of us wish we could do likewise, and say so; shewing clearly that we look upon him as an essentially lucky fellow; and so he is. Truly, he, no less than other mortals, has a fair share of difficulties, disappointments, heart-burnings, and doubts, incidental to his business; physical disagreeables to undergo, and mental distresses to overcome; notably, the never-ceasing one of his efforts falling short of the standard of excellence he sets up for himself to attain to. But he has this one never-to-be-forgotten point of supremacy.—'he is sure to love his labour as himself.' Unless he does, his handiwork will be of little worth, he is no true artist, and we are not considering him here.

Let us follow one of the right sort, then, through a few of the pleasant phases of his career. It is early spring, say; he hails the promise of genial weather with eager gladness, and is off upon the first opportunity to the yet leafless woods. The enthusiasm with which he opens his outdoor campaign is not one of the least interesting aspects which he presents. Watch him when he has settled down to a subject such as this, for instance: A

straggling mass of young oaks stretches across the middle distance; one or two ancient monarchs of the forest, gnarled, angular, and sturdy, nearer to him, are the leading features; whilst a broad, open glade of the park, terminating with a line of rook-nest dotted elms, backs up, together with the tender-toned sky, the myriad interlacings and network of the bare branches. Here, verily, is

A glimpse of spring, with flush of promise,
Falling on the fretwork of unnumbered boughs.

Primroses, bluebells, and violets in the foreground, assert themselves in bright specks of colour on every ridge and nook of the crumbling gravelly bank, and amid withered grasses, dead ferns, and rotten russet leaves. Fresh shoots of emerald grass and purple brown buds all about, give hope and promise, unfelt in autumn, to the scene. And it is not unlikely that, through some gap or vista, is to be had a distant peep of gable, roof, ivy-covered turret, quaint chimney, and a wreath of blue smoke, telling, as it curls upwards amidst the surrounding woods, of home and comfort. In such a spot as this he pitches his tent or umbrella for a longer or a shorter time, according as sketch, study, or finished picture is his purpose.

The gradual growth of the one or the other, however, so absorbs him that time becomes as nought, and all he thinks of, beyond what he is doing, is the pleasantness of the place, or the trivial little incidents that occur, perhaps, as the dappled deer, unconscious, till they are close upon him, of his peaceful presence, start off pell-mell down a drive; or the rabbits, towards evening, come out to feed, and lend a feature to the foreground, of which he takes advantage; or the gamekeeper's children come to pick up the crackling, fallen twigs, or the interest provoked by the doings of a pair of squirrels high aloft. Of the pleasant sounds, too, he will not be unconscious. The whole region is alive with melody: blackbird, thrush, and the rest of the airy choristers are giving vent to a joy that can but little exceed his, at the return of sketching weather. The varying tints from morn to mid-day and evening take up all his attention, and set him thinking how he may best utilise them. The pipe here, no doubt, will be called in as an aid at intervals, and after the mid-day snack. An indispensable agent in your artist's thoughtful moods is his pipe; and you must not think he is idling, if he frequently rises from his three-legged stool to refill and light that trusty and silent companion. It helps to solve some knotty point in the composition—for the settling *what* to do often takes longer than the doing, in the painter's craft; and a view of his canvas at different distances being essential, you are not to think him fidgety any more than idle because he is for ever up and down and to and fro.

A regular snuggery he makes of his little encampment; and the dodgy contrivances for convenience, strength, and portability, in the camp-stool, umbrella, folding-easel, colour-box, palette, haversack, &c. are worth a glance. These, with modifications according to the system on which he works, accompany him wherever he goes; and whether, as now, the beginning of his outdoor season, or later on, when in a similar spot, the scene has been turned by summer into one of green luxuriance, an air of diligent, quiet content-

ment, very enviable, hangs about him and his belongings.

Transport him to the sea-shore, it is just the same. The ebbing tide leaves bare the big brown rocks with their fringe of bladder wrack, dripping and reflected here and there in the pools, whence rivulets trickle across the smooth or furrowed sands, in the wake of the great waters of which they are the straggling remnants; the curling fringe of surf at the marge melts into the emerald, and blue, and softer azure of the sky; the stranded fishing boats; the accidentals of fishing-life; figures, carts, and donkeys, basket-laden, toiling towards the little village nestling beneath: such things as these make up sufficient of what the landscape-painter lives upon, and is never so happy as when catching.

Again, above, upon the cliff-tops, amongst the barley and the wheat, with harvesting going on, can there be a pleasanter workshop, or work more enticing than that of putting to paper successful presentments of what then and there comes under the artist's eye? Look at that ridge of golden grain as it cuts against the glittering sunlit sea; sniff the refreshing, sweet-scented breeze, listen to the quiet yet joyous sounds of larks above, waves below, and rustling corn-sheaves in the front! Why, if the open air and nature's beauties are ever to be enjoyed, here is the opportunity; and yonder bearded, bronzed-faced, easy-clad toiler under the white umbrella, is the man to make the most of it.

Wherever his pursuit of nature leads him, by copse or cliff, in rural village, on the skirts of ancient towns, amidst abbey ruins, in secluded valleys, in the hay-field, or the hop-garden as the seasons progress; on the borders of lake or mountain tarn, by the side of lily and willow fringed stream, rushing torrent, wild moor, heathery fell, Alpine pass, vineyard, olive or cypress grove; or any of the multitude of spots affected by the brethren of the brush for camping-grounds, his work-a-day hours are much the same, each one of them bringing increase of cunning to his hand, and higher and wider knowledge of God's gifts to men.

Thus and much more for his time of pleasant toil; for what can be freer or so delightful? Intercourse with all sorts and conditions of men make the painter cosmopolitan. He is usually kindly natured, and willing to be at home with everybody. Whilst on his rambles, too, 'prospecting' and marking down likely localities, he meets with infinite matters of interest, fun, and character; his unusual presence and proceedings give rise to much originality in the remarks of the natives. There is no limit to the curiosity, suspicion, and even fear, which some of his proceedings create in neighbourhoods where he is a stranger. High and low alike doubt and wonder at him at first. Aged dames, children, and even grown men, have been known, when coming along a lonely path or high-road on which an artist has been 'negotiating' a subject, suddenly to stop, look wonderingly for a moment, turn back, and incontinently flee, as if scared by the presence of a wild man or an escaped lunatic. His squatting down and risings up, his dodgings to and fro, with hands held up on either side, or above or below the face, as he has endeavoured to frame in and settle the

visual field of the picture before him, have produced a consternation and a thrill of awe impossible to exaggerate. The poisoning of head right and left, with the frantic and abortive effort at times to look at a subject through his legs, upside down, the better to get a notion of the colour as separated from the form—these gymnastics, together with his bearded, be-wide-awaked, strange appearance, and the weird, incomprehensible paraphernalia which he carries, have many a time sent a wave of terror through a limited and primitive population.

Once settled, however, in his homely lodging or unpretentious inn (for he does not affect the grand hotel, even if one be within his reach), and he is discovered to be a harmless, amiable man; he soon makes friends, his work inspiring deep interest and wonder. Perchance he is working in some quiet English nook.

'Whatever do he get paintin' for, under that theer old umbrella? What bees un at?' is a frequent question asked by one native of another.

'Why, don't ye know?' answers the second, probably the great authority of the village. 'He'll make a fine draft of it—he bees draftin' yon old ancient house, Missus Burke's. Bless your heart, they things sell for largish sums of money when "expedited" in Lunnun galleries and such-like. I've been talking to the gen'lman, and he be "intimidated" his intention of so doin' when the draft be finished. Why, I shouldn't wonder if it wer'n't to be worth a matter of four or five pounds by the time he's done wi' it.'

This leads occasionally to the assembling of an audience more admiring than convenient; but a little patience and good-nature will generally prevent its material interference with work; whilst of a certainty there will be dropped one or two observations worth remembering.

The loiterer of every degree (and what a lot of loiterers turn up when one begins to sketch, people to whom time seems of no value) is attracted, as the moth to the candle, by the white umbrella; the itinerant basket-maker or chair-mender, squatting under hedge or wall, being the only approximate rival. When his genial good-fellowship is thoroughly understood, and it is seen that the artist is not wholly ignorant of or uninterested in agricultural pursuits; that he has a knowledge of crops, pigs, poultry, cows, horses, and of farm-life generally; or understands craft and their rig, nets, fishing, and fish; can ply an oar, haul on to a rope, or manage the helm; that he is not bad company with his songs and jokes; and that he is at home in the cricket-field, or in most manly sports and pastimes—there is no more welcome or better-liked visitor to a neighbourhood. More often than not, on quitting it, he leaves, besides his good name, many a little memorial of his good-nature, in the shape of sketches of houses, places, and people, greatly treasured and shewn hereafter with laudable pride by those who have been fortunate enough to receive them.

Thus, socially as well as professionally, our artist has a pretty good time of it; and when the winter puts a stop to his work in the field, his life in the studio brings other pleasures. There, amidst quaint and heterogeneous decorations, from ancient armour and arms, to teapots and pipes—from antlers and stuffed birds, to harmonium or guitar—from charcoal caricatures, to completed oil-

pictures, rugs, tapestry, antique furniture, and the rest—he carries out and completes his summer's work: getting, as they gather round the stove in genial talk, the opinion and advice always generously proffered, of his brethren, on what he has to shew. Then come the preparations for exhibition, the mounting, the framing, &c.; followed finally by visits from those necessary individuals called buyers, with their indispensable cheques. A certain period of tribulation, it must be admitted, succeeds, through which all painters pass, or have passed—that period during which the fate of the picture is balanced by the council and hangers of the Exhibition.

But even if bitter disappointments have often to be faced in the winter, they are pretty well over and in a fair way to be forgotten—except as stimulants to renewed exertion—by the time the cuckoo has returned to her woodland haunts, and the season for outdoor work has returned.

CURIOUS PHASES IN NATURAL HISTORY.

APHIDES.

ALL who keep a garden or greenhouse must be familiar with those curious little green insects, the Aphides or Plant-lice. Existing in thousands on our flowers and shrubs, and feeding on the juices of the plants, they constitute veritable pests; and some species, infesting the bean, hop, and other cultivated plants, cause much anxiety to the agriculturist from their destructive effects on his crops. Both sexes of aphides are generally found in a wingless state; although, as will presently be explained, the individuals of one and the same species may possess wings at one period, and be wingless during the rest of the year.

A fact of primary interest in the habits of these insects consists in the attentions paid to them by the familiar ants—the famous Huber being the first who noted the discovery. Thus the ants may be observed to follow after the plant-lice, and to stroke the abdomens of the latter with their antennæ or 'feelers,' the act causing the aphides to exude a sweet viscid secretion from two tubular pores placed towards the hinder extremity of their bodies. This, the ants greedily devour. Mr Darwin mentions an observation of his own which seems to strengthen the idea that the relations between the ants and their providers are of a very intimate and reciprocal kind. Having removed all the attendant ants from a group of about a dozen aphides which resided on a dock-plant, Mr Darwin prevented the ants from regaining their vantage-ground for several hours. Feeling certain that the aphides would by that time have secreted a goodly store of the sweet secretion of which the ants are so fond, Mr Darwin watched them intently for some time, but did not observe a single aphid emit the secretion. He then tried to imitate the movements of the ants' antennæ by stroking the abdomens of the plant-lice with a hair; not a single aphid, however, responding to the imitative demand. A single ant being admitted to the guarded aphides, it was observed to hurry from one to the other, as if aware of the plentiful store of sweets awaiting its attention; and when this single marauder, if we may so term it, began to stroke the various aphides with its antennæ, the latter rapidly excreted the coveted fluid, which was greedily absorbed by the ant. Very young plant-lice similarly respond to

the call of their insect-brethren; and this latter fact would tend to shew the purely instinctive and hereditary nature of the curious impulse on the part of the aphides; whilst the action of the ants in the matter must be no less of instinctive kind.

But exceeding in interest even the curious habits just noted, we find the *development* of the aphides to present us with some phases of puzzling and inexplicable aspect. At the close of autumn, male and female aphides are found herding indiscriminately together. The eggs produced by them, after lying dormant throughout the winter season, burst into active life in the succeeding spring, and give birth, not to males and females, as might be expected, but to wingless six-legged aphides, which, if their sex be determinable at all, must be that of the female.

Now appear some curious phenomena; for if these wingless females be watched, they may be seen to produce, alive, and not from eggs, brood after brood of young aphides, exactly resembling themselves, in that they wholly consist of female insects, and like their parents, are destitute of wings. Throughout the spring, summer, and autumn, each successive generation of these wingless females thus produces progeny which repeat the features of their spinster-like parents; not a single individual of the 'sterner' sex being found within the limits of this Amazonian population. And this uninterrupted succession of female generations may be repeated and traced in a single season, through nine, ten, or even eleven generations; whilst the number of the progeny of a single aphid-mother may amount, as estimated by Reaumur, to 5,904,900,000 at the fifth generation alone. At length, when the close of autumn once more comes round, and ten or eleven generations have been born, this uninterrupted succession of female progeny ceases, and gives place to a due proportion of winged males—as at the similar period of the preceding year, when our survey of their life was supposed to begin. Then, as before, eggs are produced by this last generation; and from these eggs, in the succeeding spring, will be developed the wingless females, whose descendants will repeat the strange history of the preceding year.

If we appeal to the zoological world for an explanation of these curious facts, we shall find that several conflicting theories and opposing views prevail. As all must admit, the circumstances above detailed, and as verified by repeated observation, leave no doubt on the mind that the ordinary laws of organic development are not only set aside, but are incompetent of themselves to aid us in obtaining a solution of the matter. Thus, it has been supposed that the reproductive influence of the original and ordinary development, through eggs, of the first brood of the male and female aphides, extends throughout the succeeding generations. This, however, is merely a theoretical possibility, and does not aid us in the explanation of the anomalous fact, that the *one* sex alone, is enabled to produce living progeny; whilst under ordinary circumstances, and throughout the whole range of the oviparous world, the co-operation of *both* sexes is necessary to develop eggs capable of evolving progeny. The case of the aphides would be paralleled in that of plants, if the seeds of plants furnished by the *pistils* could be duly fertilised or rendered capable of developing a new plant, without the influence of the necessary pollen-

substance furnished by the *stamens*. And this, so far as we know, is impossible.

Naturalists know these phenomena under the name of *parthenogenesis*; and probably the best explanation of the development of the aphides, together with allied cases in other insects, is that the eggs resemble 'buds' in their essential nature; and whilst ordinarily eggs require for their development the presence of both sexes, the generations of female aphides may be regarded as produced from their single parents, by a process of *internal budding*. The stock or structure in the females from which these egg-buds are produced may be named 'germ-stocks'—the *Keim-stücke* of the German naturalists. And in this view, we might not inaptly compare the life-cycle of the aphides with that of a plant. The plant springs from the fertilised seed—as do the original aphides from true eggs. The plant further by budding produces through the greater part of the year its leaves and other organs—as the spinster-aphides produce their young by an analogous process. Then, in due season, the stamens and pistil, or reproductive organs of the plant, are formed, and the fertilised seeds capable of giving origin to a new plant are produced—just, indeed, as the aphides in their turn develop both sexes, and as from the eggs thus developed, new beings with special powers and tendencies are introduced into the wondrous cycle of their life. The consideration of such interesting phenomena as the preceding, should forcibly impress us, above all other considerations, with the marvellous plasticity of living forms, and with the endless variety of contrivance and action, which, for the accomplishment of its own duly arranged ends, life is continually exhibiting before us.

HOLY LOCH.

How fair the scene, as from this mound
Of cushioned heath we gaze around.
The verdant slopes with mingling shades,
The ravine's intersecting glades,
Part covered with the mountain flock,
Part ruins gray of fallen rock.

Or fix our gaze upon the strand,
Where wavelets kiss the golden sand;
Or view the silvery lake at rest,
Rough mountains mirrored on its breast.
The aspect breathing peace! until,
Round by the brow of yonder hill,
The kestrel wheels with hungry eye,
Wind hovering, his prey to spy:
The timorous lark far 'neath his wings
Close to the earth for safety clings
'Mid kindred hues, till sails away
To other range the bird of prey:
Then mark—the danger out of sight—
The laverock heavenward takes her flight,
And the response from hill and glen,
Rejoicing in her notes again.
Thus nature's ways will never cease
To link with *strife* the joys of *peace*! W. G.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.